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Submitted photos

PATTON OSWALT: The 3-day, five-venue Limestone Comedy Festival begins at 7:30 p.m. May 29 at the Buskirk-Chumley Theater, with none other than two-time Grammy-nominated comedian, voice-over artist, actor and author Patton Oswalt.



JIMMY PARDO: Limestone Comedy Festival headliner and "Conan" warm-up comic Jimmy Pardo is scheduled to perform at 7 and 10:30 p.m. May 30 at the Buskirk-Chumley Theater in Bloomington.



EMO PHILIPS: To close out this year's Limestone Comedy Festival, headliner Emo Philips is set to perform at 7:30 and 10 p.m. May 31 at the Buskirk-Chumley Theater in Bloomington.

Limestone Comedy Festival returns

Patton Oswalt, Jimmy Pardo, Emo Philips set to headline.

By Rob Burgess
Kokomo Tribune

BLOOMINGTON — For the second year, the Limestone Comedy Festival is ready to take over downtown Bloomington this spring.

“We’re excited,” said Mat Alano-Martin, LCF co-director. “We’re bringing in some really cool people this year.”

The 3-day, five-venue comedy extravaganza begins at 7:30 p.m. May 29 at the Buskirk-Chumley Theater, with none other than two-time Grammy-nominated comedian (“Finest Hour”); voice-over artist (“Ratatouille”); actor (“The Secret Life of Walter Mitty”); and author (“Zombie Spaceship Wasteland”), Patton Oswalt.

“I was flattered to get asked,” said Oswalt, in a phone interview earlier this month.

The original impetus for the LCF sprang from Bloomington’s highly-regarded and well-known venue, The Comedy Attic.

“It’s probably my favorite club in the country,” said fellow LCF headliner and “Conan” warm-up comic Jimmy Pardo, who is scheduled to perform at 7 and 10:30 p.m. May 30 at the BCT. “They are sharp, smart comedy people, and [they have] really educated the audiences as to good comedy.”

To close out this year’s LCF, headliner Emo Philips is set to perform at 7:30 and 10 p.m. May 31 at the BCT.

“The promoters are connoisseurs of comedy,” he said. “I played The Comedy Attic in late September 2010, and I truly enjoyed walking around Bloomington; as well as through it.”

Philips’ long list of credits ranges from TV (“The Weird Al Show”), to movies (“UHF”), to cartoons (“Home Movies”). Earlier this month, Oswalt called

him a “master” on Twitter. Philips said he was “stunned” to be described as “legendary” by the LCF organizers.

“I think it's something I could easily get used to,” he said. “Besides, I'm pretty sure a bard would be far cheaper than a publicist.”

In addition to the headliners, the LCF will also feature more than 40 top comedians including Sasheer Zamata (“Saturday Night Live”); Cristela Alonzo (“The Late Late Show with Craig Ferguson”); Carmen Lynch (“Last Comic Standing”); Erin Foley (“Curb Your Enthusiasm”); Ben Moore (“The Bob and Tom Show”); and Ryan Singer (CMT’s “Next Big Comic” contest).

“We have a lot of people [this year who] ... next year are going to be [huge,]” said Alano-Martin.

Four different podcasts are also booked for live tapings at the LCF: “Sports Without Balls” (hosted by Erin Foley); “Competitive Erotic Fan Fiction” (hosted by Bryan Cook); “Rock Solid” (hosted by Pat Francis); and “Never Not Funny” (hosted by Pardo).

Started in 2006, “Never Not Funny,” is one of the original comedy podcasts. For the past few years, the podcast has put on an annual 12-hour marathon show called “Pardcast-A-Thon,” which benefits the charity Smile Train. They raised nearly \$141,000 last year. In January, “Never Not Funny” moved to the Earwolf Podcast Network in both a free, and a premium — aka “Player’s Club” — version.

Pardo — who, like Philips, is a Chicago native — said he drew inspiration for his own show from his favorite childhood broadcasters.

“I grew up listening to guys named Steve Dahl and Gary Meier out of Chicago, who are my radio heroes, and I always said if I ever did any sort of radio show I would try to emulate them as best as possible,” he said.

“[‘Never Not Funny’ is] basically just me and Matt Belknap and Pat Francis; three comics just talking. ... You’re almost like a fly on the wall inside a comedy green room.”

“Never Not Funny” has previously recorded two podcast episodes in Bloomington at The Comedy Attic, and is scheduled to tape another at 4 p.m. May 31 at the BCT. Hoosier comedy fans may also remember Oswalt’s November 2007 visit to the BCT during The Comedians of Comedy tour — which also featured Brian Posehn, along with two of 2013’s four LCF headliners, Doug Benson and Maria Bamford.

Aside from opening the LCF, Oswalt will be quite busy in the Midwest over the next few months. Two days after playing Bloomington, he will again take the stage May 31 at The Chicago Theatre in Chicago. And on April 24, Oswalt will appear at Ebertfest in Champaign, Ill. to present “Young Adult,” the 2011 film in which he co-starred. The Chicago Sun-Times’ late, revered film critic and festival namesake gave the movie three-and-a-half out of four stars upon release.

“I was supposed to be [at Ebertfest] last year and ... my schedule went crazy,” said Oswalt. “I couldn’t do it. So, I’m doing it this year, which is bittersweet because [Roger Ebert is] not with us anymore. ... Last year, I was going to show ‘Kind Hearts and Coronets,’ but then I ended up showing it on Turner Classic Movies. ... There will be a ‘Young Adult’ screening that I’ll be at, and then I’m going to screen the [original version of] ‘The Taking of Pelham One Two Three.’”

Elsewhere in the Midwest next month, both Philips — April 3 to 6 — and Pardo — April 18 to 19 — are scheduled to play Wiley’s Comedy Club in Dayton, Ohio.

Pardo’s most recent album, “Sprezzatura,” was released in September 2013. Oswalt’s latest hour-long special, “Tragedy Plus Comedy Equals Time,” was recorded at the Spreckels Theater in San Diego, and directed by Bobcat Goldthwait. It originally debuted on Epix HD in January, but will premiere at 10 p.m. April 6 on Comedy Central. The CD/DVD combo album will be released April 8 by Comedy Central Records.

Alongside the seasoned professionals at the LCF, the event will also play host to some relative novices. In association with Ivy Tech Community College, the LCF has once again sponsored beginner — and now, advanced — stand-up comedy classes. Alano-Martin said the advanced class students will perform a graduation show at 4 p.m. May 30 at The Comedy Attic.

“The advanced class is for those who want to then maybe pursue it, and really are interested in being part of the Midwest comedy scene,” he said.

“There have been at least one or two people from each class that have ... at least kept on open miking in Bloomington or Indianapolis.”

Rob Burgess, Tribune night editor, may be reached by calling 765-454-8577, via email at rob.burgess@kokomotribune.com or on Twitter at twitter.com/robaburg.

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IF YOU GO:

WHAT: The Limestone Comedy Festival

WHO: Patton Oswalt, Jimmy Pardo, Emo Philips and over 40 other comedians.

WHEN: May 29 to 31

WHERE: Bloomington, multiple venues: The Buskirk-Chumley Theater, 114 E. Kirkwood Ave.; The Comedy Attic and The Bishop, 123 S. Walnut St. (same address); The Ivy Tech John Waldron Arts Center, 122 S. Walnut St.; and The Back Door, 207 S. College Ave.

COST: Verified Very Incredibly Important Party Person and Very Important Person badges now on sale for \$175 and \$125, respectively. Both include

access to nine shows, guaranteed seating for BCT shows and an exclusive after party. VVIIPP badges also include up-front seating, autographed poster, goodies and reserved seating at smaller shows. General Limestone Badges (\$75) and Friday/Saturday Only Badges (\$50) will go on sale Tuesday. (A limited number of individual tickets for each BCT evening show might go on sale a week before the festival.)

FOR MORE INFORMATION: www.limestonefest.com